

Innovative Housing Grants Program

OUTDOOR MAINTENANCE ADAPTATIONS FOR A SENIOR'S HOME

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INTRODUCTION

Many seniors find that the burden associated with their homes becomes an insurmountable obstacle to their continued independence and cite it as a major reason they are forced to move into alternate, and often institutional, forms of housing.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study was to develop a maintenance manual to help seniors continue a comfortable and independent lifestyle in their own homes. Detailed objectives included:

- i) identifying the outdoor maintenance work that seniors view as onerous and contributory to their decisions to move; and
- ii) evaluating alternate exterior building materials, landscape designs, and maintenance strategies, that are both cost effective and easy.

METHODOLOGY

Research included an extensive literature review and interviews with

senior homeowners, a landscape contractor, a nurseryman, a home maintenance consultant, and senior citizen agencies.

FINDINGS

This report provides suggestions that can assist seniors in making decisions about outdoor adaptations in order to create a safer and more accessible environment. The emphasis is on adaptations for easier outdoor maintenance, which will be of assistance to those of increasing age or those with physical disabilities. However, the various outdoor adaptations noted do not apply to all homes, and outdoor modifications must be assessed on an individual basis for each lot and for each reader.

The report contains the following information which readers may utilize in planning their own exterior maintenance program:

- i) a detailed illustration and design of various landscape elements;
- ii) a list of equipment that can simplify maintenance tasks;

- iii) a list of low-maintenance plants and bushes;
- iv) a maintenance activity and timetable guideline;
- v) a representative pricing schedule; and

- vi) a list of supplemental government and private services or agencies that can assist seniors.

While this report is geared primarily to seniors, it is a valuable resource tool for anybody seeking to reduce the outdoor maintenance of the typical single-family Albertan home.